

NEWS

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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Report No. CI 98-13 COMPLIANCE AND INFORMATION ACTION August 14, 1998

FCC CLOSES DOWN 15 UNLICENSED RADIO STATIONS IN MIAMI AREA

The FCC, in conjunction with the U.S. Marshals Service, seized radio equipment by court order from 15 unlicensed broadcast stations in the Miami, Florida, metropolitan area. Of the 15 seizures, 13 of those occurred within a five day period, from July 27 through July 31, 1998. The confiscated equipment had been used to broadcast illegally in violation of Section 301 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §301.

The seizures occurred against illegal broadcasters operating on 104.1 MHz in Miami; 94.5 MHz in North Miami; 107.1 MHz in Miami Beach; 97.7 MHz in Miami; 89.1 MHz in Miami; 91.7 MHz in Miami; 88.7 MHz in North Miami; 90.9 MHz in Davie; 95.3 MHz in Miami; 90.3 MHz in Homestead; 92.7 MHz in Coconut Grove; 104.7 MHz in Hialeah; 99.5 MHz in Miami; 90.9 MHz in Homestead; and 101.1 MHz in Coconut Grove. These seizures are a part of the FCC's on-going enforcement efforts against unlicensed broadcast stations. Other agencies assisting the FCC in this action included the U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Customs, the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Coast Guard, the United States Attorney's Office, and local law enforcement officers.

The types of equipment seized ranged from homemade transmitting components to professionally manufactured equipment illegally imported from foreign countries. Both the homemade components, and the illegally imported equipment, which is not authorized for use in the United States, have the potential to cause serious interference problems to several types of licensed communications, including vital aviation and other public safety frequencies. The equipment seized includes two 2,000 watt transmitters.

The FCC's Compliance and Information Bureau is concentrating on closing down unlicensed radio stations in a nationwide effort. FCC Chairman William Kennard said, "the operation in Miami, Florida, was CIB's most successful, large-scale, enforcement action against unlicensed operators to date. This Commission has enforced and will continue vigorously to enforce the law against unlicensed broadcasters."

Operators of illegal, unlicensed broadcast stations may be subject to monetary penalties of up to \$11,000 per violation, seizure by court order of all radio equipment involved in the operation, or court order enjoining the operator from operating an illegal station. Unlicensed operators could also be subject to criminal fines of up to \$100,000 or imprisonment of up to one year, or both, for a first time offense.

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